

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 3384

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TU, YO
SUBJ: ECEVIT'S VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA

REF: BELGRADE 3279

1. SUMMARY: OUR READING OF ECEVIT'S VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA IS THAT IT WAS UNDERTAKEN FOR A MULTITUDE OF REASONS; AND ALTHOUGH IT MET WITH FAILURE IN SOME AREAS -- MOST NOTABLY CYPRUS -- IT SUCCEEDED IN OTHERS. END SUMMARY

2. WE APPRECIATE VERY MUCH EMBASSY BELGRADE'S REPORT ON TURKISH PRIMIN ECEVIT'S MID-APRIL VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA -- PARTICULARLY SO SINCE WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DISCUSS THE VISIT WITH MFA OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN TIED UP IN THE JUST-COMPLETED VISIT OF ROMANIAN PRIMIN MANESCU AND TODAY'S VISIT TO BULGARIA BY ECEVIT. WE NOTE WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST TURKISH EMBOFF'S
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CHARACTERIZATION OF VISIT AS A FAILURE. THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION HERE, IN CONTRAST, IS THAT THE VISIT WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL. WE SUSPECT TRUTH LIES SOMEWHERE IN-BETWEEN.

3. ON THE SPECIFIC ISSUE OF CYPRUS, ECEVIT WAS PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED. HE CLEARLY HOPES THAT HIS EFFORT TO CULTIVATE TURKEY'S TIES WITH THE THIRD WORLD WILL BE REWARDED BY

MORE UNDERSTANDING OF TURKEY'S CYPRUS POSITION. THE YUGOSLAV REFUSAL TO ENDORSE THE CONCEPT OF A BI-ZONAL, BI-COMMUNAL FEDERAL STATE ON CYPRUS MUST HAVE BEEN SEEN AS PARTICULARLY RIGID. ON THE OTHER HAND, A COLUMNIST IN PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER CUMHURIYET MAY 2 CLAIMS THAT THE YUGOSLAV EXPRESSION OF HOPE FOR RESULTS SATISFACTORY "TO BOTH NATIONAL COMMUNITIES" CONSTITUTED AN ENDORSEMENT OF TURKISH POLICY -- AND A SUCCESS FOR ECEVIT'S "DYNAMIC NEW FOREIGN POLICY." IN VIEW OF TURKISH EMBOFF'S COMMENTS IN REFTEL AND STATEMENT TO US HERE IN ANKARA BY YUGOSLAV EMBASSY COUNSELOR TO THE EFFECT THAT GOY HAS NOT ALTERED ITS POSITION ON CYPRUS, WE CONCLUDE CLAIMS OF VICTORY EITHER SELF-DELUSION OR DELIBERATE EFFORT TO COVER UP DEFEAT.

4. NEVERTHELESS, WE DOUBT THAT ECEVIT CONSIDERED HIS VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA A TOTAL LOSS. TITO AND YUGOSLAVIA OCCUPY A SPECIAL POSITION IN TURKEY'S POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, THEY CHOSE INDEPENDENCE FROM BOTH BLOCS; AND THAT CHOICE HAS EARNED THEM WORLD RESPECT AND ACCLAIM. MANY TURKS BELIEVE TURKEY COULD HAVE MADE SUCH A CHOICE, AND IN RETROSPECT (ESPECIALLY NOW THAT DETENTE HAS DULLED FOR THEM THE IMMEDIATE THREAT OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT THE US ARMS EMBARGO HAS MADE MANY BELIEVE THE US IS AN INCONSTANT ALLY), THEY WONDER IF IT MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN THE CORRECT ONE. ECEVIT REALIZES THAT SUCH A VIEW IS OVERLY SIMPLISTIC, BUT HE SHARES A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO THE YUGOSLAV EXAMPLE. CONFIDENTIAL

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ONE MANIFESTATION OF TURKEY'S LONGING FOR A LESS DEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST IS THE DECLARED AIM OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT TO REASSERT ITS ROLE AS A MIDDLE EASTERN, BALKAN, AND MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY. THE VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA NOT ONLY SERVES THAT POLICY AIM, IT ALSO SERVES AS A QUIET HINT TO THE WEST THAT TURKEY HAS ALTERNATIVES -- AND IS STUDYING THEM.

5. ANOTHER POSITIVE FACTOR FROM ECEVIT'S POINT OF VIEW WAS THE OPPORTUNITY IT GAVE HIM TO RUB ELBOWS WITH TITO. ECEVIT IS A STRONG BELIEVER IN THE UTILITY OF HIGH-LEVEL PERSONAL CONTACTS -- AND MEETING WITH RECOGNIZED LEADERS ENHANCES HIS DOMESTIC IMAGE AS AN INTERNATIONAL FIGURE.

6. FINALLY, ECEVIT IS KNOWN TO BE FASCINATED BY YUGOSLAVIA'S "SUCCESSFUL" PURSUIT OF A "NEITHER CAPITALIST NOR COMMUNIST" SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SYSTEM, AND HE REPORTEDLY WANTED TO OBSERVE IT FIRSTHAND.

7. IN CONCLUSION, WE BELIEVE ECEVIT WENT TO YUGOSLAVIA BECAUSE IT GAVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE WHICH SERVED BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL

GOALS. HE UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO HOPED TO PERSUADE TITO TO TAKE
A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION ON CYPRUS, AND PERHAPS
EVEN TO AGREE TO PROMOTE SUCH A VIEW AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED.
WHILE HIS LACK OF SUCCESS IN THIS EFFORT WAS PROBABLY DISAP-
POINTING, IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN VERY SURPRISING. SPIERS

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